Nina dos Rios

The Unexpected Tune



Teacher's Guide

About This Guide

This guide accompanies **The Unexpected Tune**, a story about twins Ethan and Emily Smith and a trick they play on their father.

The story introduces useful everyday technology vocabulary through actions the children perform on a laptop. It also provides opportunities to practice sequencing, prediction, comprehension, inference, and discussion about humor, choices, and consequences.

The Unexpected Tune — Readability

Original Spache Readability Formula	**Revised Spache Readability Formula**
Score: 3.87 Reading Difficulty: Easy Grade Level: Fourth Grade Age Range: 9-10	Revised Score: 3.42 Reading Difficulty: Very Easy Grade Level: Third Grade Age Range: 8–9

A readability score is only a guide. Some words in this story are intentionally more advanced because they teach useful vocabulary, especially words related to computers and technology.

Here's the story with words not on the Spache 3,000-word list in bold:

THE UNEXPECTED TUNE by Nina Dos Rios

Ethan and **Emily Smith** love **being** twins. They both have **blonde** hair and **playful** blue eyes like **Mom**.

But the twins are always up for a good time. They have each other's backs—always!

They love playing tricks. And, of course, two **kids** can **brainstorm** better than one.

Dad is a **pastor**. He worked all week on an important **PowerPoint presentation** for church. Every night, he sat at his **laptop** working on the slides. He **added** pictures, words, and music to go with his **sermon**. He worked until it was perfect.

On **Friday** evening, Dad was **finally** done. He showed his **presentation** to **Mom** and all the **kids**.

Emily and **Ethan** liked the slides, but they thought **Dad's** music was **boring**. Then **Emily** had an idea.

On **Saturday** morning, the twins **sneaked** into **Dad's study** and opened his **laptop**. They found the **PowerPoint file** and **clicked** to open it.

Next, they opened a **web browser**. They **searched online** for one of their **favorite** songs from when they were very young.

"There it is!" **Ethan** whispered.

Emily clicked the **link**, and they **downloaded** the song.

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Then they went back to **Dad's PowerPoint**. They found the music in his **presentation** and changed it to their song.

"Perfect!" **Ethan** said.

They **clicked** Save, closed the **file**, and left **Dad's laptop exactly** where they had found it.

On **Sunday** morning, Dad began his **sermon**. He opened his **PowerPoint presentation**, and everything seemed **normal**. The slides and music were perfect together.

But just when he reached the most important moment of his **sermon**, the music changed.

A new song began to play: "Baby **shark**, **doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, doo**. Baby **shark**!"

At first, **Ethan** and **Emily** smiled and winked at each other.

Then they could not stop laughing.

They watched **Dad's** surprise turn into a smile when the **congregation** began to laugh. In less than one minute, the church was filled with roaring **laughter**.

Dad knew who did it. He finished the **sermon** with a good-**natured chuckle**.

"My twins seem to have **developed** some cool **computer skills**," he told the **congregation**.

After the **service**, Dad pulled **Ethan** and **Emily aside**.

The twins were sure they were in big **trouble** now.

But Dad surprised them.

"That was a very clever trick you played on me," he said. "But don't let it happen again."

The twins **nodded**. They **tried** to look sorry, but the corners of their mouths would not stop **going** up.

Soon, their smiles reached from ear to ear.

They knew that no matter what, Dad would always have a **sense** of **humor**—even when "Baby **Shark**" showed up during a **sermon**.

Vocabulary List of Words and Simple Definitions

Use this list to pre-teach selected words before reading or as a reference while reading.

The words are grouped by type to make classroom teaching easier.

Technology

laptop	A small computer that can be carried from place to place.

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PowerPoint	A computer program used to make presentations with slides.
presentation	Information, pictures, or ideas shown or explained to other people.
slide	One page or screen in a digital presentation.
file	Information saved on a computer under a name.
web browser	A computer program used to visit websites and look at information on the internet.
online	Connected to or using the internet.
search / searched	To look for information, especially on a computer or the internet.
click / clicked	To select something on a computer screen by pressing a mouse button or using a touchpad
link	Words, a picture, or another item on a screen that you can click to open another page, file, or location.
download / downloaded	To copy a file or information from the internet onto a computer or other device.
save	A computer command that keeps changes made to a file.
computer skills	The ability to use a computer and computer programs.

Church & People

pastor	A leader of a Christian church.
sermon	A talk given by a pastor or other religious leader during a church service.
congregation	The group of people gathered together for a church service.
service	A time when people gather together for worship in a church.

Actions & Reactions

brainstorm	To think of many ideas, often with another person or group.
sneaked	Moved quietly and secretly so other people would not notice.
whispered	Spoke very quietly.
winked	Quickly closed and opened one eye, often to share a joke or secret.
nodded	Moved the head up and down, usually to show agreement or understanding.
aside	Away from the other people so someone can speak privately.

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developed	Learned, gained, or became better at something over time.

Feelings & Descriptions

playful	Liking to have fun, joke, or play
boring	Not interesting or exciting.
favorite	Liked better than the others.
normal	Usual or expected.
good-natured	Friendly, pleasant, and not easily made angry
chuckle	A quiet, gentle laugh.
trouble	A difficult situation, sometimes caused by doing something wrong.
sense of humor	The ability to understand, enjoy, or make jokes and funny situations.

Other Useful Words and Expressions

blonde	Having light yellow or golden-colored hair.
have each other's backs	An informal expression meaning to help, support, or protect each other.
trick	Something done to surprise or fool another person, sometimes as a joke.
exactly	In precisely the same way or place; with no difference.
from ear to ear	An expression describing a very big smile.

Technology in the Story

Technology words can be easier to learn when students connect them with actions. Ask students to follow the twins' actions in order:

1. They open the **laptop**.
2. They find the **PowerPoint file**.
3. They **click** to open it.
4. They open a **web browser**.
5. They **search online**.
6. Emily clicks a **link**.
7. They **download** the song.
8. They return to the **PowerPoint presentation**.
9. They change the music.
10. They click **Save**.
11. They close the **file**.

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Teachers may demonstrate these words on a computer if one is available. Students do not need to memorize every technology word before reading. Many of the meanings can be learned from the actions in the story.

American Culture and Context Notes

Personal Computers and Laptops
In the United States, it is common for individuals and families to own laptops or personal computers. In your country, laptop ownership may be less common. You may use a shared computer or a smartphone for many of the same activities.

PowerPoint Presentations
PowerPoint is widely used in American schools, businesses, churches, and other organizations. A PowerPoint presentation is made of individual screens called **slides**. Slides may contain words, photographs, drawings, charts, video, or sound.

In the story, Dad uses PowerPoint to add pictures, words, and music to his sermon.

Technology in Church
Many churches use computers, projectors, and large screens during worship services. A church may display song lyrics, Bible verses, photographs, announcements, or sermon illustrations. This practice varies from church to church. Some churches use a great deal of technology, while others use very little.

Pastor and Sermon
Dad is a pastor. A **pastor** is a leader of a Protestant Christian church.

A **sermon** is a talk about faith, the Bible, or Christian life that is usually given during a church service.

The people attending the service together are called the **congregation**.

More information about the role of a pastor in the Smith family is included in the Teacher's Guide for **Meet the Smith Family**.

Sunday Church
Sunday is the traditional main day for Christian worship in the United States, although churches may also have services and activities on other days. In the story, Dad prepares his presentation during the week and uses it during the Sunday church service.

“Baby Shark”
“Baby Shark” is a children's song that became widely known among young children and families. It is Public Domain as it comes from an old song.

The famous "Baby Shark" cartoon characters are replaced by generic sharks on the coloring page because the copyright is owned by The Pinkfong Company, Inc.

Students are very likely to know the song. However, they only need to understand that Ethan and Emily chose a funny children's song because they thought it would be a good trick.

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The humor in the story comes from the contrast between a silly children's song and the serious moment in Dad's sermon.

Discussion Questions are suggestions: You need not use all of these. Use whichever activities or questions are appropriate for your students and your class situation.

Before Reading

1. Look at the title **The Unexpected Tune**. What do you think might happen in this story?
2. What is a **tune**?
3. Have you ever made a PowerPoint presentation or watched someone give one?
4. What are some things you can do with a laptop or computer?

During/After Reading — Comprehension

5. Who are the two main children in the story?
6. What was Dad preparing for church?
7. Why did Ethan and Emily decide to change Dad's music?
8. Where did the twins go on Saturday morning?
9. What did they use to search for the song?
10. What did Emily click before they downloaded the song?
11. What did the twins do after they changed the music?
12. When did Dad discover that the music had been changed?
13. How did the congregation react when the new song began to play?
14. What did Dad tell the congregation about the twins?
15. What did Dad say to Ethan and Emily after the service?

Sequencing Exercise

Put these events in the correct order:

- The twins downloaded a song.
- Dad showed the family his presentation.
- Emily and Ethan changed the music.
- Dad began his Sunday sermon.
- The congregation laughed.
- The twins clicked Save.
- Dad talked to the twins after the service.

Additional Sequencing Questions

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16. What did the twins do before they opened the web browser?
17. What did they do after they found the song online?
18. Why was clicking **Save** important?
19. What happened after Dad heard the unexpected music?

Inference and Character

20. Why do you think Ethan and Emily sneaked into Dad's study instead of asking permission to use his laptop?
21. The story does not say directly that the twins knew they were doing something they should not do. What actions show that they knew?
22. Why did Ethan and Emily leave the laptop exactly where they found it?
23. Why do you think Dad's surprise turned into a smile?
24. Dad knew who had changed the music. How do you think he knew?
25. Why were the twins sure they were in big trouble after church?
26. Dad called the trick "clever," but he also told the twins not to do it again. Why can something be clever and still be something you should not do?
27. What does Dad's reaction tell you about his personality?
28. At the end of the story, Ethan and Emily try to look sorry, but they begin to smile. What does this tell you about how they feel?

WH-words Question Practice

Use complete sentences when possible.

Who changed the music in Dad's presentation?

What kind of presentation did Dad make?

When did the twins change the music?

Where did they find the song?

Why did they change Dad's music?

How did they put their plan into action?

What happened when the new music played?

How did Dad react?

Vocabulary in Context

29. Find the word **brainstorm** near the beginning of the story. What are Ethan and Emily good at doing together?
30. The twins **sneaked** into Dad's study. How would the meaning change if the story said they *walked* into his study?

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31. Find the words **web browser**, **link**, and **downloaded**. Explain what the twins did using all three words.
32. What does **congregation** mean in this story?
33. Dad gave a good-natured **chuckle**. Is a chuckle a loud angry sound or a small laugh?
34. What does it mean when the twins “have each other's backs”?
35. What does the expression “their smiles reached from ear to ear” tell us?

Personal Connection

36. Have you ever played a harmless trick on someone? What happened?
37. Have you ever changed something on a computer and forgotten to save it?
38. Which computer words in this story did you already know?
39. Which technology word was new to you?
40. Ethan and Emily worked together to carry out their idea. When have you worked with another person to solve a problem or complete a project?
41. What would you have done if you were Dad when the unexpected music started?

Optional Extension Activities

1. Technology Sequence

Ask students to draw six boxes.

In each box, draw or write one step the twins used to change Dad's presentation.

Students can use sequence words:

First — Next — Then — After that — Finally

Example:

First, the twins opened Dad's laptop.

2. Technology Word Match

Write the technology words on one set of cards and their meanings on another.

Suggested words:

laptop — file — browser — search — link — download — click — Save

Students match each word with its meaning.

For additional practice, ask students to use each word in a sentence.

3. Tell the Story From Dad's Point of View

Ask students to imagine they are Pastor Smith.

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Begin:

“On Sunday morning, I opened my PowerPoint presentation…”

Students can tell or write what happened next.

This activity gives practice with first-person language and encourages students to think about the same event from another person's point of view.

4. Design a Presentation Slide

Ask students to design one PowerPoint-style slide on paper.

The slide can include:

- A title
- A picture
- One or two sentences
- A description of what music or sound they would add

Students may present their paper “slide” to the class.

5. What Should the Twins Have Done?

Discuss other choices Ethan and Emily could have made.

For example:

- Ask Dad before changing his presentation.
- Make a funny presentation of their own.
- Show Dad the song after church.
- Ask whether they could help Dad with his slides.

There does not have to be one correct answer. Encourage students to explain **why** they chose their answer.

Teacher Note

The Unexpected Tune can be used as both a reading-comprehension story and a practical introduction to common computer vocabulary.

The technology words are intentionally taught in context rather than as isolated terms. Students can follow a familiar sequence of actions—open, click, search, download, save, and close—even if some of the individual English words are new.

For beginning ESL learners, teachers may choose only five or six technology words for active vocabulary and allow the remaining words to be learned through context.

For more advanced students, the full technology sequence can be used for speaking, writing, and sequencing practice.

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